

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MASERU 01536 181356Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 SP-02 H-01 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 EB-08 /037 W
-----071383 190918Z /11

R 181305Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8962
INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 1536

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, ELTN, LT
SUBJECT: LESOTHO SOUTHERN PERIMETER ROAD

1. SUMMARY: THE SIGNING ON JUNE 30, 1978 OF THE AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO (GOL) ON THE SOUTHERN PERIMETER ROAD ESTABLISHES A LANDMARK IN US-GOL RELATIONS UNLIKELY TO BE MATCHED IN THE NEXT DECADE. THIS MESSAGE IS TO RECORD APPRECIATION TO ALL CONCERNED FOR MAKING IT POSSIBLE AND TO REVIEW ONCE AGAIN THE REASONS THAT MAKE IT SO IMPORTANT. END SUMMARY.

2. GOL GAINS. THE LESOTHO SOUTHERN PERIMETER ROAD HAS ENJOYED THE HIGHEST PRIORITY OF THE GOL FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS. POLITICALLY THE ROAD OPENS THE OPTION OF TRAVEL TO OBTAIN SUPPLIES AND SERVICES WITHIN LESOTHO FOR AN ESTIMATED 100,000 PERSONS, THEREBY HELPING THEM AVOID TRANSKEI AND ANY DEALING WITH DISTRUSTED BANTUSTANS, AS THE UN AND OAU HAVE URGED. ECONOMICALLY, THE ROAD IMPROVES ACCESS OF AN ESTIMATED 250,000 BASOTHO LIVING IN THE SOUTHERN REGION TO SOURCES OF SUPPLY AS WELL AS MARKETS FOR WHAT THEY PRODUCE. PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THE ROAD IS EVIDENCE THAT LESOTHO'S APPEALS FOR ASSISTANCE HAVE BEEN HEARD; IT IS NOT ALONE IN FACING AND OPPOSING AN APPENDAGE OF APARTHEID.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MASERU 01536 181356Z

3. US POLICY GOALS. THE ROAD ALSO HELPS ADVANCE US POLICY OBJECTIVES IN LESOTHO AND SOUTHERN AFRICA. THESE OBJECTIVES INCLUDE (A) REDUCING LESOTHO'S DEPENDENCE ON ITS NEIGHBOR, THEREBY STRENGTHENING ITS INFLUENCE AS AN EXAMPLE OF NON-RACIALISM AND BLACK MAJORITY RULE; (B) ENHANCING THE FORCES FAVORING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE AREA, THEREBY HELPING TO VINDICATE MODERATE GOL POLICIES AND RELIANCE ON FREE WORLD SUPPORT

IN A REGION WHERE RADICAL MILITANCY IS GAINING GROUND; (C)
HELPING REDUCE LESOTHO'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION WHICH
COULD UNDERMINE THE STABILITY OF THE GOL.

4. BACKGROUND. AN ESSENTIAL CONCEPT IN GRASPING THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE SOUTHERN PERIMETER ROAD IS THAT LESOTHO, IN THE WORDS
OF ONE MFA OFFICIAL IS NOT JUST ON THE FRONTLINE; IT IS BEHIND
THE LINES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST APARTHEID. REFLECTED IN THIS
EXPRESSION IS THE DEEP NATIONAL CONCERN AT BEING EXPOSED,
DEFENCELESS AND BELEAGUED. THE OVERWHELMING WEIGHT OF RSA
POWER MAKES THEM (UNDERSTANDABLY) SUSCEPTIBLE TO ALARMS AND FEARS
AND HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO THE RISKS AND DANGERS OF THEIR SITUATION.
THE FARAH MISSION, WHICH DEMONSTRATED THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY'S RECOGNITION OF LESOTHO'S POSITION, WAS THEREFORE
PARTICULARLY COMFORTING. THE RECOMMENDATION TO BUILD THE SOUTHERN
PERIMETER ROAD TURNED OUT TO BE THAT MISSION'S SINGLE MOST
IMPORTANT PRACTICAL PROPOSAL, DESIGNED TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE
CREATED BY TRANSKEI "INDEPENDENCE". THE US DECISION TO FINANCE
THE ROAD THUS ACQUIRES NOT MERELY NATIONAL BUT REGIONAL AND EVEN
INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.
NORLAND

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, HIGHWAYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MASERU01536
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780296-0079
Format: TEL
From: MASERU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780748/aaaabomx.tel
Line Count: 83
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 84325171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1972392
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LESOTHO SOUTHERN PERIMETER ROAD
TAGS: EAID, ELTN, LT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/84325171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014